THE

RESTORATION

OF

SUFFRAGAN BISHOPS

RECOMMENDED,

AS A MEANS OF EFFECTING A

MORE EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF EPISCOPAL DUTIES,

AS CONTEMPLATED BY HIS MAJESTY'S

RECENT ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSION.

BY

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, M A.

FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

"Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee: thou art not able to perform it thyself alone."

Exodus xviii. 18.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The writer of the following remarks thinks it advisable to state at the outset, with reference to the recent Commission, that, without pronouncing how far and in what cases the formal approval of the Church to the Report of such a Commission may be dispensed with, agreeably to ecclesiastical usage,—or how far a Commission is of authority in which the Lay Members outnumber the Clerical, —or how far it is expedient or pious to alienate for the benefit of other places endowments left for the uses of particular sees or parishes, he desires to view the Commission as the expression of the Church's wish for certain changes in her economy, sanctioned and furthered by the King, as her supreme governor, at the instance of the Bishops, his natural ecclesiastical advisers. If the appointment of it be considered in any sense as an arbi-

trary interference of the State with her temporalities, it would, of course, be inconsistent with Church principles in any degree to recognize it.

March 12, 1835.

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It has been the misfortune of the Established Church during the last several years, when, in common with our other institutions, its framework and actual operations have been freely discussed, that the plans recommended for the increase of its efficiency have taken the shape of reforms, and not of restorations of its ancient system. Nothing but the prevailing ignorance concerning ecclesiastical matters can adequately account for this mistake. Authors, not indisposed (to say the least) to the doctrine and discipline of the Church, have indulged in projects for its better adaptation to present circumstances, which, from their novelty and boldness, could only be justified by the absence of his-

torical precedent and experience. They have not even taken the pains to ascertain its actual position relatively to the State and to the Nation; as if it had now, for the first time, made its appearance among us, and suddenly lighted upon our soil, based on no definite principles or engagements to which regard must necessarily be paid in all measures of alteration, however beneficial. Or, if they have seemed to understand the necessity of moving on the line of former ecclesiastical arrangements, they have not done more than catch at such acts of the Tudor sovereigns as are distinguished above the rest for their anomalous and extraordinary character; without attempting to enter into the genius, or accurately to settle the principles, of our religious institutions. Writers, thus regardless of the constitutional relation of the past towards the present, could not be expected to recognise the philosophical bond which connects one age with another, the correspondence of certain periods in the recurring cycles of human affairs, and the instruction thence derivable for our political conduct. Accordingly, far from feeling reverence for an institution which has, in one shape or other, existed in the country for at least 1200 years, they have not allowed it to avail itself of its antiquity even as a guide, but have considered it as a mere subject for external interference, and for ingenious experiment.

But, in truth, to such as turn their minds ever so little to its history and antiquities, it is evident that

the Church is "like a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." It is no birth of a day, no creation of a political crisis, no tender and inexperienced offspring of Kings' courts or domestic retreats. It has from the first been thrown upon the world; and it knows the world well in all its artifices and all its wants. It has a store of weapons for all times and circumstances, (if it be allowed, and keep in memory how to use them,) a vigorous principle of life, and an inherent self-renovating power. It has gone through all the periods of human society; from the state of luxury and decay, in which it originally found the world, to the age of revolutions which followed, thence to the night of barbarism, the second dawn of science, the growth of political freedom, and of the commercial spirit, and the ascendancy of the law, down to the present day, when the over-civilization of its first period seems to have returned. It reared itself against a military tyranny; it fearlessly threw itself upon the intelligence, and ruled the lawlessness of great cities; it extended itself over the broad country, into mountain recesses, and over boisterous seas, till

> The flashing billows of the South
> Break not upon so lone an isle,
> But thou, Rich Vine, art grafted there,
> The fruit of death or life to bear,
> Yielding a surer witness every day
> To thine Almighty Author, and His stedfast sway.

It had its persuasives for the feudal sovereign, as well as for the multitudes which were its first capture. It has since attached itself, among ourselves, to limited monarchy, and has been found to be the best bond and medium of intercourse between King and People. And all this it has often proved itself to be, by the mere instinct of its natural character, and when itself partially ignorant of its previous history and its true position. How is it possible that any juncture of affairs can occur, which it has not already met and overcome? Doubtless it is fully adequate to the gracious purpose for which it was founded, that of coping with human nature in all its forms; and has nothing to fear at the present time but from our ignorance of its resources, and the panic terrors, and loss of self-command, and credulous trust in empirics, thence resulting,—

οὐδ', ὁποῖ' ἀνὴρ
ἔννους, τὰ καινὰ τοῖς πάλαι τεκμαίρεται,
ἀλλ' ἔστι τοῦ λέγοντος, ἢν φόβους λέγῃ.

The chief problem, for example, before the Church at present, is how to supply the local wants of an overgrown and disaffected population; but this, serious as it is, is no novel one. No city can threaten religious truth more fiercely than Constantinople in the fourth and fifth centuries; a city created for the very purposes of imperial luxury, hallowed by no local antiquities, the home of no

religious remembrances, the abode (in the historian's words) of a "lazy and indolent populace[1]," the port of commerce, and (by a fortune unparalleled perhaps in every other city) the very focus of a speculative misbelief, and of the almost fanatic party which upheld it. Yet even here Christianity triumphed; triumphed so far as to maintain itself in place and authority for ages, and to be able to extend the light of religion to such as would receive it. What need have we to do more now, than to master and apply that policy (to borrow a statesman's word) which enabled the Church to achieve its early victories?

These reflections, admitting of a minute and various application at the present time, are however only made here by way of introducing to the reader the particular measure which is to be the subject in the following pages; the restoration, in the larger or more populous dioceses, of the primitive institution of Suffragans, *i. e.* District Bishops, as assistants to the Diocesans of each. At the same time, this instance itself, which is to engage our attention, will incidentally tend to recommend the important general principle under which it falls; viz. that, to improve our system, we have need, not of innovation, but rather of such historical knowledge, insight into human nature and our own national character, statesmanlike sagacity, wisdom, and sound judg-

[1] Gibbon, Hist. ch. xvii.

ment, as may enable us to develope the latent powers of the Church into the form most suitable to arrest and control the existing fashion of the times.

However, it may be necessary to add, that in what has been, or is to be, said about Antiquity, nothing is assumed as to its intrinsic *authority* at the present day. For though such authority may, in the opinion of many men, suitably be claimed for it, yet the primitive practice of the Church is here adduced either as a medium of historical experience, or in mere illustration of general principles otherwise established.

Of the three subjects which are to engage the attention of the Ecclesiastical Commission lately appointed by His Majesty, the first includes in it a reference "to the more equal distribution of episcopal duties," in "the several dioceses of England and Wales." Thus, the Royal testimony is expressly borne to the existence of an inconvenience which has long been felt by all well-wishers of the Church, the excessive ecclesiastical duties which weigh upon certain of the sees, and the desirableness of relieving them, in some way or other, of a portion of them. It is not, however, generally considered, that another of the heads of inquiry contained in the Commission opens a way to the attainment of this object. The proposed consideration of "the state of the several cathedral and collegiate churches within the same" portion of the kingdom, "with a

view to the suggestion of such measures as may render them most conducive to the efficiency of the Established Church," may obviously be made subservient, without any great difficulty, to the improvement of the diocesan system. And such, indeed, seems to be the view of the Commission itself; for in projecting " the prevention of the necessity of attaching by *commendam* to bishoprics benefices with cure of souls," it does in fact naturally lead the mind to the consideration of the deaneries and chapters, as the means through which an annexation of preferment may be effected, when such benefices are withdrawn. But if the cathedral and collegiate dignities may be made subservient to diocesan purposes in this way, why may they not in another? Why should they not be made the means of relieving the overburdened sees of a portion of their present duties, as well as of detaching cures from certain others? Why not employ them in the endowment of a certain number of suffragan or assistant bishops, to take the charge of respective districts in each? If the necessity of such an addition to the present episcopal body can be shown, one would think there could not be a more appropriate application of the chapter dignities (supposing any new application to be made of any of them), nor one which would more recommend itself to the laity; whose solicitude has hitherto been directed more to the well-being of the inferior clergy than of the Bishops, not from any want of personal

respect or attachment to the latter, but because the laborious exertions of parochial ministers, and the deficiencies in the parochial system, were more before their eyes. Yet a very little consideration will teach us, that additional Bishops are called for in various districts as fully and urgently as additional clergy;—called for quite independently of the coincidence of our possessing places of emolument, which may be used in the creation of them. It is necessary to insist upon this; lest persons, who happen to have made up their minds upon the application of the chapter dignities to other purposes, should feel towards the measure I am recommending, as towards a theory or project which interferes with their own particular plans for strengthening the Church; whereas, let them assign these dignities as they will, still it will be true, that an addition to our existing Bishops is desirable, in whatever way that addition is to be provided.

The most obvious reason for increasing our number of Bishops is the increase in the population. In Elizabeth's reign (1588),[1] the population of England amounted only to 4,400,000; two centuries before (1378), to 2,300,000[1]; now it is as many as 13,897,187[2]. At the present time, the diocese of Chester has 1,883,958 souls committed to its charge; that is, more than three-fourths of

[1] Hallam, Const. Hist. ch. i. [2] Population Returns, 1831.

the whole population of England in the reign of Richard II. London has 1,722,685; York, 1,496,538; and Lichfield, 1,045,481; these three together being nearly equal to the whole population 250 years since. But such overwhelming charges speak for themselves, even if we had no increase of numbers (such as has been pointed out) to ascertain our forefathers' judgment on the subject.

This *primâ facie* case for an addition is confirmed by the circumstance, that even three centuries ago, and prior to that increase, such a measure was actually contemplated by our Reformers. Prior to those local accumulations of population, which present so distressing a problem to the Christian philanthropist, and to that inveterate spirit of unbelief, that systematized opposition to the vital and ancient doctrines of religion, which is the perplexity of the orthodox churchman, Cranmer, in the first years of his primacy, projected a considerable extension of the episcopal office. On the confiscation of the abbey lands (1539), he advised Henry to endow with the proceeds from fifteen to twenty new sees, five of which were actually created, and now remain [1]. Another plan for increasing the efficiency

[1] Westminster did not survive its first bishop. Two of the Suffragan towns are in the number of the five new sees, Gloucester and Bristol. Bingham (Antiq. ix. 8.) says Cranmer proposed "near twenty" sees. Short (Church Hist.) mentions, from Strype, a plan for twenty. Burnet (Hist. Reform. iii.) enumerates fifteen.

of the Church, which he succeeded in executing to the extent of his wishes, was the measure to which I shall more directly call the reader's attention in the sequel, the addition of Suffragans to the existing sees, to the number of twenty-six. It appears, then, that finding the whole number of Bishops twenty-one, he designed to have raised it at least to sixty, *i. e.* to have nearly trebled it, with a view to meet the wants of the Church in *that* day; whereas, five only, scarcely more than an eighth part of the addition he contemplated, were created.

Usher, whose authority in matters of ecclesiastical discipline has always been popular, went much farther than Cranmer; though he had in part a different object in view in the reformation he proposed. He was desirous perhaps of removing from the episcopate some part of that secular appearance which accidentally attaches to it in inconsiderate minds, when the sees are few, and richly endowed; yet undoubtedly he is a witness, and a most important one, of the desirableness of what may be called a *resident* episcopacy, and of an increase of the number of Bishops for that purpose. In a plan which he drew up in 1641, when the first committee on Church affairs was formed, he proposed that suffragan Bishops should be appointed equal to the number of rural deans in each diocese, with a jurisdiction extending over the respective deaneries. This project, indeed, did not deserve, any more than it met with success; but the testimony which

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it bears to the need of increased episcopal superintendence is corroborated by the Declaration put forth by Charles II. in 1660, in which suffragan Bishops are promised in the larger dioceses, though this intention was never fulfilled.

Such is the evidence of later times; if, on the other hand, we recur to the infancy of English Christianity, we find the first founders of our Church as decisive as to the propriety of portioning out its territory into numerous dioceses, and as clear in the precedent of doing so gradually. Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, had been empowered by Gregory to erect another metropolitan see at York, on the understanding, even in that missionary era, that each province was to contain twelve sees. The actual conduct of the English Church, following up this intention on its own judgment, is an independent witness to the importance of its object. Dorchester, the first see of the West Saxons, during the rule of its second bishop, gave birth to Winchester; which in turn was relieved, at a later date, of Exeter, Bath and Wells, Salisbury, and Bristol. And before this, Lindisfarne, in the north, had been the mother see of York, and thence, again, of Hexham and Whithern[1]. By these gradual additions the dioceses amounted to seventeen in the time of Bede, who expresses

[1] Inett, vol. i. pp. 48. 90. &c.

his desire of a still further increase[1]. Such was the shoot made by the Church after the Saxon invasion. Far more numerous in point of sees was the original British Church, which had been introduced from Gaul. At the synod of Brevy, held in the seventh century, by reason of the Pelagian troubles, there are said to have been present as many as 118 British Bishops; and this report, even though it be an exaggeration, is an argument, by its very

[1] Bede, writing in 735 to Egbert, Bishop of York, "recommends in terms very passionate and full of concern, the increasing the number of Bishops and secular clergy, to preach God's holy word in country towns and villages. For, saith he, there are many villages in the woody and mountainous parts, which for many years never saw the face of a Bishop, and have none to instruct them in the common principles of religion or morality, and yet there is no place but what pays tribute to their Bishop.—But, to perfect this great work, he tells Egbert, that he thought nothing so likely as to *increase the number of Bishops*, and advises that for that end this prelate, with the advice of Ceolwulf, King of Northumberland, and his council, should *erect several* new Bishoprics, and in order thereto, they should take several of the monasteries, and in them erect new sees; and that, by this means, York, according to the ancient platform of Gregory the Great, might be erected into a metropolitical see; and, if need require, he recommends that they should take the lands belonging to other monasteries. Thus, saith he, 'those houses of which we all know there are many, unworthy the name of monasteries, from serving the ends of vanity and luxury, may be brought to assist and bear a part *in the burthen of the Episcopal office.*'"—Inett. vol. i. p. 156.

existence, of the prevalence of notions concerning Episcopal superintendence very different from the present.

Again, in Ireland, at one time, there were from fifty to sixty sees.

The primitive dioceses of southern and eastern Christendom were still more numerous, as is well known. The Churches in Italy were but rural Deaneries in extent, being not above five or six miles from each other. The kingdom of Naples (unless the revolutions of the last thirty years have occasioned any change) contains 147 sees, of which twenty are archbishopricks; and the state of Asia Minor, Syria, and Africa, was quite conformable to this model [1].

I am far from supposing that we, in our altered circumstances, must do every thing which former times have done; or that the English Church, united as it is to the State, need be conformed to the usage of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies; but I take leave to claim for the first age of Christianity, sanctioned as it is by the almost universal consent of after times, that it had a *reason* for what it did, and that there is some natural advantage to the Church in the multiplication of Bishops, (which may be hindered indeed, or become a disadvantage, or otherwise attained, under certain political circumstances, but) which sanctions and confirms

[1] Vide Bingham, Antiq. ix.

arguments for that multiplication drawn from other sources.

Such arguments are to be found in the enormous size of some of our present Dioceses, as is partly allowed, partly implied, in the words of the Royal Commission. Considering the peculiar nature of the duties of a Christian Pastor, surely a population rising from 900,000 to 1,800,000 was never intended to be the charge of one man. I would not willingly seem to intrude into the concerns of others; but surely the inferior clergy and the laity are bound in duty, not indeed to go before, or to act without their Rulers, but to concur in such sentiments and measures as they seem to approve. If, indeed, *they* wished things to remain as they are, private men would have no right to speak on the subject; but we are sanctioned by the King's Commission to enlarge upon an evil which, I will venture to say, every thinking man will admit, the over-populousness of the existing Dioceses. Such vast charges must be distressing even to the most vigorous minds; oppressing them with a sense of responsibility, if not, rather, engrossing, dissipating, and exhausting their minds with the mere formal routine of business. If they are able to sustain such duties, they are greater than the inspired lawgiver of Israel, who said, "I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me." Nothing is more necessary to the Rulers of the Church, than that they should have seasons

of leisure. A whirl of business is always unfavourable to depth and accuracy of religious views. It is one chief end of the institution of the ministerial order itself, that there should be men in the world who have time to think apart from it, and live above it, in order to influence those whose duties call them more directly into the bustle of it. So much was this felt in early times, that places of retreat were sometimes assigned to the Bishops at a distance from their city, whither they were expected to betake themselves, during certain seasons of the year, for the purpose of collecting their minds. Doubtless such leisure may be abused, as every thing else; but so far is clear, that while leisure *may* become an evil, an incessant hurry of successive engagements *must* be an evil, a serious evil to the whole Church, hurtful to any one, and more than personally hurtful, dangerous to the common cause, in the case of those who are by office guides of conduct, arbiters in moral questions, patterns of holiness and wisdom, and not the mere executive of a system which is ordered by prescribed rules, and can go on without them. And when it is recollected that, in addition to their ecclesiastical duties, our Prelates have their place in the councils of the realm, most beneficially to the nation (which, indeed, as a Christian people, is bound to uphold them there), not to mention the necessity of their meeting together annually for various ecclesiastical purposes, it must be evident to every one that they,

more than any other order in the Church, require assistance in their Dioceses, during at least a part of the year; and that to them especially applies an appellation, in its right and honourable sense, which is given by our adversaries with a mixture of pity and disrespect to others. The Bishops are the true "working Clergy;" and most undoubtedly, the moment they give to us a hint of their wishes (which they recently have done in the Royal Commission), we are absolutely bound, we cannot without undutifulness omit, to evidence our interest, and promise our co-operation, in whatever they shall determine for the better administration of their Dioceses, and meanwhile to assist them by such suggestions as we have reason to hope may not be unpleasing to them.

What I have said suggests another view of the subject. Much is said about the advantages of a resident Clergy, and these certainly cannot easily be overrated; but surely there are as great benefits resulting from a resident Episcopacy also. I own I cannot enter into the views of those who, measuring the duties of the Bishop's office by the number of his Clergy, contend that, because these, though far more numerous than formerly, have not increased of late years proportionably to the population, therefore we want no increase of the Episcopal order; or who set against the increase of routine business, the present improvement of the roads, the expeditiousness of posting, and the

promptness and precision of communications of all sorts. Certainly, if the office and work of a Bishop lie chiefly in being a referee, or controlling power, in matters of business, without present or personal superintendence, without the influence of name and character, without real jurisdiction, without actual possession and use of his territory; then, indeed, a modern writer's assertion will be true, that all the Bishops of England may be swept away without the people knowing the change[1]. If he is mainly the functionary of statutes, the administrator of oaths, the agent of correspondence about the building of churches, the management of societies, and the "serving of tables," important as these objects are, still surely they would be much better accomplished by putting the Episcopate into commission. One general board would manage the ecclesiastical business of the kingdom far more promptly and uniformly than a number of persons chosen without special reference to such qualifications. But if a Bishop is intended to bear with him a moral influence, to have the custody of the Christian Faith in his own place and day, and by his life and conversation to impress it in all its saving fulness of doctrine and precept upon the face of society, if he is to be the centre and emblem of Christian unity, the bond of many minds, and the memento of Him that is unseen, he must live

[1] Hallam, Const. Hist. ch. xv.

among his people. Let us not forget that great ecclesiastical principle, which is as fundamental in Christianity as it is in its nature the offspring of a profound philosophy. One Bishop, One Church, is a maxim so momentous, that, if his presence can by no expedient be made to extend through it, there is sufficient reason for dividing it into two. He is in the theory the one pastor of the whole fold; and though by name an overseer or superintendent, yet his office lies quite as much in being seen in his Diocese, as in seeing. Human nature is so constituted as to require such resting-places for the eyes and hearts of the many. Some minds there may be of peculiar make, whether of unusual firmness or insensibility, who can dispense with áuthorities to steady their opinions, and with objects for the exercise of their affections; but such is not the condition of the mass of mankind. They cry out clamorously for guides and leaders, and will choose for themselves if not supplied with them. Here, then, Christianity has met our want in the episcopal system, and in extending the influence of that system we are co-operating with it.

Few persons can have witnessed the coming of one of our Bishops to consecrate some country church, or to confirm in some remote district, without being struck with the persuasive power of his presence in eliciting from the rural population a kindly and respectful feeling towards the Church over which he presides. The hour and circum-

stances of his coming are only one part of the benefit resulting from it. Days and days before, it is looked forward to as a great event. From the clergyman down to the little child just come to school, all is expectation. Catechist and catechumens are all coming before him who is the representative and delegate of the Chief Pastor, who one day will visit once for all. Lessons are learned, admonitions given, with reference to a direct and immediate religious object. Let it not be objected that the novelty is the cause of this. Sunday comes once a week, yet does not, by its frequency, lose its force as a memorial of the next world. And there is one portion of the community, the largest, and to the Christian teacher the most interesting, to whom the presence of the chief Pastor must be ever new, the fresh and fresh generations of children, who are advancing forward from infancy to youth. It is obviously most necessary to impress them with dutiful feelings towards the Church. In the opening of life they are brought before the Bishop to make their first solemn confession, and to receive from his hand the fulness of those blessings which were conveyed in baptism. This, indeed, may be done with a small number of functionaries, by congregating the children who are to be confirmed into the towns from the villages round. But no one, who knows any thing of those large assemblies of young persons for Confirmation, but will deprecate a necessity which has

so injurious an effect (to say the least) on the solemnity of the sacred ordinance;—no one, (I suppose), on the other hand has witnessed the decency, the tranquillity, and the sanctity of those limited Confirmations which our Bishops, at an expense of personal convenience, are so ready to hold, but must understand the benefit which would accrue if such an arrangement could be the custom of the Church, the benefit of imparting to a very solemn rite those associations of home scenery and home faces which will endear to them in after life the memory of the Administrators;—and no one but will confess, that, unless some very grave difficulties interfere, such meetings between Pastor and flock are the true means of strengthening the Establishment with the people at large. Viewing the matter even in a political light, I should say to the parties competent to do it,—Increase the number of our Bishops. Give the people objects on which their holier and more generous feelings may rest. After all, in spite of the utilitarianism of the age, we have hearts. We like to meet with those whom we may admire and make much of. We like to be thrown out of ourselves. The low-minded maintenance of rights and privileges, the selfishness which entrenches itself in its own castle or counting-house, the coldness of stoicism, and the sourness of puritanism, are neither the characteristics of Englishmen, nor of human nature. Human nature is not republican. We know what an immediate

popularity is given to the cause of monarchy, when the sovereign shows himself to his people, and demands their loyalty. And, in like manner, those who watch narrowly may see all the purer and nobler feelings of our nature brought out in by-standers, in a less enthusiastic, only because in a more reverential way, by the sight of the heads of the Church; when, in proportion to their knowledge and religious principle, that flame of devoted and triumphant affection is kindled among them, which has ever led to the highest and more glorious deeds, which, as it is loyalty in the subject, so is it gallant bearing in the soldier, and piety in the child;—and, witnessing it, they will understand that this is the one point in which the Church, as a visible system, has the advantage of all sects; that this is, in fact, our characteristic, our peculiar treasure.

True it is, that the struggle of Christianity mainly lies with the towns in this day, and not in the country; but I conceive that in towns, too, a mass of latent generosity and affectionateness exists, if we knew how to elicit it. The question is not, whether their prominent character is not evil, whether it is not impossible to turn them as a body in favour of the Church, but whether we have any right to leave to themselves those scattered embers of a nobler temper, which, over and above their own preciousness, would be, if concentrated, a powerful antagonist to the waywardness and the selfishness of the many. But, putting aside this part of

the subject, surely if the presence of the Episcopal Office is more persuasive in the country, it is more necessary in the town. It is scarcely too much to say, that our great cities require even a missionary establishment. They require the formal appointment of an Evangelist, commissioned to enlighten and reclaim those outskirts of Christendom, which, in the heart of a Christian country, tread very closely upon heathenism. If the vice, the ignorance, the wretchedness there existing are to be any how met, it is not by the labours of a few parochial Clergymen, however exemplary and self-denying, occupied (as they are) with the services of their churches, the management of their vestries, the visitation of their sick, the administration of alms, and their domestic duties and cares, but by one of disengaged mind, intent upon the signs and the exigencies of the times, and vested with authority to promote co-operation among his fellow-labourers, and to conduct the Christian warfare on a consistent plan. In such populous neighbourhoods, every denomination of Christianity is organized for action, except that which we consider the true form of it; which, instead of being able to address itself to the thousands of ignorant and depraved who are to be found there, with the view of benefitting them, has to battle for its own existence against the combination of restless and inveterate enemies. Or if any organization is to be found there on the part of the Church, it is of a very ambiguous character;—

some religious society, for instance, which has been founded among semi-dissenters, admits them to membership and even to rule, and thinks it a great merit to avow its intention of furthering the interests of the Establishment, or considers it has proved its churchmanship, if it has obtained the names of some dignitaries among its well-wishers and patrons. Or at best, a number of zealous and well-intentioned laymen, very little informed in the principles of their own communion, have contrived, perhaps, to set in motion some system of parochial visiting, which, carrying away first the Clergy of the place, whether they will or no, and next themselves, with resistless energy, and going apace towards Methodism and Dissent, seems to claim of the Church the grant of a resident Overseer, free from the secular business which besets Diocesan, Archdeacon, and Incumbent, and able to guide and regulate its movements.

Such is the state of things at the best; but it may be far worse. It may be, we shall find the Clergy, whom accident has thrown together in one place, differing from one another by various shades of opinion, (as men always will differ), and going on to differ in conduct (as men need not differ), cold and distant towards each other, split into parties with leaders on both sides; and all this mainly for want of a common superior. The most friendly-disposed minds often feel the need of an umpire in matters of duty, when neither likes to

have the responsibility of abandoning his own view for that of the other, and both would rejoice to be allowed to defer to a third person. And if this occur in the case of friends, much more is it true, when there is a want of familiarity and sympathy between parties, a difference of ages, tempers, habits, judgments, or connexions, or some mutual jealousies and suspicions; and when the warmth of affectionate allegiance to a common superior is the only means of drawing out, kindling, and fusing together discordant minds. In this state of things, it will perhaps happen that some intrusive layman, scarcely a member of the Church, self-confident and ready-tongued, will become the ordinary arbiter of all differences, and the virtual ecclesiastical head of the place; or some adjacent landed influence will exert itself in acts subversive of that Establishment, towards which at best it entertains cold, perhaps unfriendly feelings. It is a question, indeed, whether the present most lamentable differences of religious opinions among the Clergy would ever have existed, had we been possessed of more ecclesiastical heads. To provide for soundness and unity of doctrine has been one especial object of the Episcopal Form from the first. The schools of philosophy were many and discordant; but the "One Faith," put into the hands of every Bishop, forthwith becomes the rallying point and profession of his whole Church. So necessary is this, that in Protestant Germany, where the episcopal order

has been suspended since the Reformation, schools of doctrine are found to arise from time to time, (as under Spener, Neander, and the like,) as if nature witnessed in favour of Episcopacy; and this state of things is acquiesced in and defended by pious men from the evident necessity of the case, in spite of St. Paul's warning against taking Masters and setting up one against another. Without such instrumentality, both by way of stimulus and instruction, religious truth will languish; schools will arise and fall, and waste themselves in mutual quarrels; while the enemy will not fail to turn all such scandals and failures to the injury of religion itself.

If the control I speak of is ever to be exercised, it must be soon. The evil does not admit of delay. Already almost, fulfilling the description of the historian, *nec vitia nostra, nec remedia pati possumus;* our sufferings do but make us shrink from the treatment necessary for a cure. Educated in irresponsible freedom of word and action, we resist any external authority; so much so, that the view above given of the episcopal office, perhaps may startle, to say the least, some persons, who would fain consider themselves Churchmen. But are we not, if the truth must be spoken, tending to this—to learn to dispense with the episcopal system altogether? Is not this the upshot (so to say) of our present ecclesiastical and civil policy? Could the bulk of the laity, could a number of the Clergy,

give any answer, satisfactory even to themselves, if asked plainly what was the *use* of having Bishops? This is not the place to enter into any theological discussion concerning it, though some hints on the subject have been incidentally thrown out in the foregoing pages. Only let us observe carefully the fact. Does the popular religionist of the day know the benefit of them, who enlarges on the "orthodoxy" of certain Dissenters, who lays a stress on certain sectaries agreeing with the Church in "doctrine," who would direct Missions by means of Boards, and dissuades from dissent on the mere ground of the Church being the State Religion? Or on the other hand, does the popular politician,—who keeps his eye fixed upon the parochial Clergy, who considers them the essence of the Establishment, who makes their residence up and down the country (not merely a most important, but) the one object of his solicitude, who would multiply and establish them (which indeed he may most beneficially do, but) to an undue preponderance and dangerous influence over the Episcopate, while he so fully recognises in them mere instruments and adjuncts of the State, that it would be but consistent in him, if he could, to put them once for all under a Minister of Public Instruction? Lastly, in spite of the acknowledged influence of the Bishops within the range of their personal friends, is there not, if it may be said, a painful and growing separation of feeling, on the whole, between the Episcopal Bench

and the Clergy? Is there not going on a gradual organization of the Clergy into associations and meetings, which threatens, unless the Bishops become part of it, to eject their influence, as something foreign to our system? If these things be true in any good measure, even though exaggerated, it will follow that there is a *tendency* in the age to dispense with Episcopacy. I am here only concerned with the fact. Let us understand our position. To those, indeed, who regard the Episcopal Order as the bulk of Christians for eighteen hundred years have regarded it, who see in it the pledge and the channel of the blessings of Christianity, associate it with the various passages of history with which it is implicated, and consider it as the instrument of numberless civil benefits, the thought of such a loss gives too piercing a pain to allow of their enlarging on it. All I would say is, let us see where we stand; let us do what we do wittingly; lest, perchance, we one time "rise in the morning" and find our treasure gone.

These considerations, while they illustrate (as it is presumed) the importance of the general object of relieving the more heavily burdened sees, as proposed in the recent Ecclesiastical Commission, discountenance one supposed mode of effecting it, which is sometimes recommended, *viz.* that of re-

moving a see from a less to a more populous district of the kingdom. Independently of all objections to so violent a measure on various grounds, with which I will not weary the reader, it may suffice to say that even the smaller dioceses are larger than would be desirable were the ecclesiastical territory re-arranged from the beginning; that, such as they are, they are in some sort witnesses and memorials of a better state of things; and that, in matter of fact, *more* Bishops are wanted, and that to transfer the sees is only to shift about, not to remove the evil. As far as the question of ecclesiastical usage goes, we may take the authority of Bingham, whose name, on such subjects, as every one knows, stands very high; and who devotes a portion of his elaborate work on Christian Antiquities, to the consideration of the dioceses of the first ages: "One great objection," he says, "against the present Diocesan Episcopacy, and that which to many may look the most plausible, is drawn from the vast extent and greatness of some of the northern dioceses of the world, which makes it so extremely difficult for one man to discharge all the offices of the episcopal function . . . . The Church of England has usually followed the larger model, and had great and extensive dioceses; for at first she had but seven bishopricks in the whole nation, and those commensurate in a manner to the seven Saxon kingdoms. Since that time, she has thought it a point of wis-

dom to contract her dioceses, and multiply them into above twenty; and if she should think fit to add forty or a hundred more, she would not be without precedent in the practice of the Primitive Church [1]."

Bingham's leaning then was towards an addition of Dioceses after the primitive model; but any measure of subdivision, even though unattended with a suppression of sees elsewhere, must be considered unadvisable, for several reasons. For, over and above the legal difficulties which may attach to it, it is an organic change, and so irretrievable. It is a measure taken without trial, the passing of an experiment into law. Moreover, as multiplying centres of government, it tends to dissipate the energies of the Church, and admits the risk of dissension and discordance of operation.

On the other hand the system of Suffragans is in all respects the safest as well as simplest mode of relieving such Diocesans as at present are oppressed by an excess of pastoral duties. To this system our attention shall be directed in what follows.

Suffragans, or district Bishops, Chorepiscopi, (as they were anciently called), are Bishops located in a diocese, assistant to the see, without jurisdiction of their own, and ecclesiastically subject in all matters to the Diocesan. They are altogether his

[1] Bingham's Antiq. ix. 8. fin.

representatives and instruments, enabling him, as it were, to be in different parts of his diocese at once, and to continue his pastoral labour unremittingly, as it is called for.

Before entering into their history, I will make two remarks, by way of recommending them to the reader.

First, Suffragans may be appointed *at once* for certain twenty-six towns, under an existing Act of Parliament, viz. 26 Henry VIII. c. 14.[1] ; nothing being needed for their restoration, but the approbation of the Ecclesiastical Commission to the revival, on the part of the Bishops, of a statute which, having slept, may need some such sanction. And though many of the towns therein specified would be passed over in the present day, yet among the dioceses provided for, are some of those which especially require our attention.

And next, the office, involving as it does, no organic changes, admits of a cautious experiment, may be gradually and partially introduced, shifted from see to see according to circumstances, and (should it seem desirable) at any future time silently discontinued. Such being its recommendations, I go back to trace its history amid the rudiments of the episcopal system.

[1] Bingham, Antiqu. ix. 8. fin. Short's Church History, vol. ii. p. 226, note.

In primitive times the first step towards evangelizing a heathen country seems to have been to seize upon some principal city in it, commonly the civil metropolis, as a centre of operation; to place a pastor, *i. e.* (generally) a Bishop there, to surround him with a sufficient number of associates and assistants, and then to wait till, under the blessing of Providence, this Missionary College was able to gather around it the scattered children of grace from the evil world, and to invest itself with the shape and influence of an organized Church[1]. The converts would, in the first instance, be those in the immediate vicinity of the Missionary or Bishop, whose diocese nevertheless would extend over the heathen country on every side, either indefinitely, or to the utmost extent of the civil province; his mission being without restriction to all to whom the Christian faith had never been preached. As he prospered in the increase of his flock, and sent out his clergy to greater and greater distances from the city, so would the homestead (so to call it) of his Church enlarge. Other towns would be brought under his government, openings would occur for stations in isolated places; till at length, "the burden becoming too heavy for him," he would appoint others to supply his place in this or that part

[1] Vide Tracts for the Times, No. 33, in which, however, there are one or two inaccuracies.

of the province. To these he would commit a greater or lesser share of his spiritual power, as might be necessary; sometimes he would make them fully his representatives, or ordain them Bishops; at other times he would employ Presbyters for the purpose. In process of time, it would seem expedient actually to divide the province into parts; and here again the civil arrangement was followed, the several lesser cities becoming the sees of so many dioceses, coextensive with the districts of which those cities were the political centres. Thus at length there were as many sees as there were cities of the empire, and all of them in their respective provinces subordinate to the Metropolitan as he was called, or Bishop of the civil metropolis, from whom, always in the theory, often in fact, they sprang; while at the same time each had an independent internal jurisdiction of his own. The Bishop of the subordinate cities included in the province were called Suffragans to the Metropolitan, because they had the right of voting with him in the provincial council. In this sense it is that the Bishops of London, Rochester, Winchester, and the rest are suffragans of the Archbishop of Canterbury; but this, though the first and most appropriate sense of the word, must not be confused with that to which I have already appropriated it.

The same process by which the diocesan organi-

zation of the province was conducted, was at the same time carried within the limits of the separate dioceses also. According to the necessities of each (whether from its populousness or its extent, being mountainous perhaps or desert, with a scattered people, or but partially Christian,) the Bishop appointed about himself a number of assistant Bishops, and Presbyters, distributing them here and there as he judged best [1]. These Bishops so far resembled in position the diocesans of the province, that they were scattered through a district and connected with a centre; but they differed from them in having no independent jurisdiction and territory of their own. They were not externally merely, but altogether subject to the see to which they were assistants, as being but the representatives and delegates of the Bishop holding it. These, then, are the ecclesiastical functionaries whose restoration I am advocating; Chorepiscopi, or Country-bishops, as they were anciently called, and in more modern times (though the reason is scarcely known), Suffragans.

The office of these Chorepiscopi, or district Bishops, was to preside over the country clergy,

[1] The country-Presbyters in like manner were called ἐπιχώριοι πρεσβύτεροι. Vide Concil. Neocæsar. Can. 13. Dr. Routh's note upon the thirteenth Canon of the Council of Ancyra, in which he vindicates the prerogative of ordination to the episcopal order against the presbyterian objections drawn thence, is but one out of the many benefits he has conferred upon apostolical Christianity.

inquire into their behaviour, and report to their principal; also to provide fit persons for the inferior administrations of the Church. They had the power of ordaining the lower ranks of Clergy, such as the readers and sub-deacons; they might ordain priests and deacons, with the leave of the city Bishop, and administer the rite of confirmation; and, what was a still greater privilege, they were permitted to sit and vote in councils. Thus, on the whole, their office bore a considerable resemblance to that of our Archdeacons; except, of course, that Archdeacons are Presbyters, and that they were Bishops, had the power of ordination and confirmation, and the reverence due by right to that high spiritual office, whether or not united to civil dignities. And in matter of fact, by such Presbyters (visitors, as they were then called,) they were superseded in the course of the fourth and following centuries, till at length in the ninth the Pope caused the order to be set aside altogether.

This measure of the Roman See was in accordance with the line of policy which it has ever pursued. It has ever aimed at depressing the episcopal order, and vesting the authority of the priesthood in its own succession. At Trent, as is well known, the Legates of the Pope successively resisted the recognition of the Episcopal Office as founded on divine right, not on ecclesiastical regulation [1]. And the innovations upon the orthodox faith, which

[1] Vid. Sarpi, Conc. Trident, lib. vii.

go under his name, have commonly been introduced by means of his assumption of authority as Universal Bishop, the delegated guardian and oracle of Apostolical Truth[1]. However, in the matter under consideration, others appear to share the blame with him.

From the time that Christianity was recognised by the State, there was a growing disposition on the part of the Bishops principal, to dispense with this subsidiary order of Chorepiscopi. As their sees grew in wealth and civil importance, they began (as it would appear) to be impatient of a description of clergy, who had but invisible sanctions of authority, who were their equals in spiritual dignity, while they were their inferiors in secular consideration, and who hindered them, in some sense, from enjoying monarchical rule in their respective dioceses. As early as the middle of the fourth century, a Provincial Council of Laodicea decreed, that for the future no Bishops should be provided for the country villages, but only the Visitors already spoken of; and though

[1] It would seem, then, that the number and independence of the Bishops is our guarantee against doctrinal corruptions. And so it has been accounted from the first, as is evident from the works of Irenæus, Tertullian, &c. They are especial trustees, so to say, of the Christian covenant; and in *diminishing* them, we diminish the security of future generations. This throws a painful light upon the late suppression of the Irish sees. Should that or any other form of heterodoxy be ever then attempted there, there will be only half the number of Bishops to be gained over to the innovation.

this local decision did not necessarily affect the other parts of Christendom, yet it was a symptom of what was secretly going on in the religious temper of those times, and the presage of that lamentable usurpation which the Bishop of Rome, more successful than his fellows, was able at length to effect over the whole Church.

As to our country, situated at the furthest extremity of the West, it but slowly received that ecclesiastical organization, which sprang up in Asia almost under the feet of those who first "preached the good tidings" there. The early British Church, indeed, may have more nearly resembled the Eastern Dioceses than the Saxon; but, if we commence with the time of Augustine, (A. D. 596,) we shall find from thence down to these last centuries, a partial indeed, but a growing resemblance to the fully furnished system of antiquity. Indeed, up to the present date, when (to mention what is a sign of the times) Rural Deans have been revived in various dioceses, there has been a continual effort of the Church, in spite of events which have from time to time thrown it back, to complete the developement of its polity. The Dioceses were originally of the larger class, from the circumstance that the sees were of the nature of Missionary Stations in a heathen soil. Large as they were, and intended for subdivision by Gregory, yet they had but insufficient increase, and little internal organization all through the Saxon period, accord-

ing to the most probable opinion. Arch-presbyters indeed, or Rural Deans, there were, and Archdeacons; but to these the Bishops delegated no local jurisdiction, employing them occasionally according to circumstances. An improvement was made upon this imperfect state of things at the Conquest, by the accident of civil changes. William separated the ecclesiastical from the secular Courts, and this in the event threw upon the Bishops a multiplicity of business, in which hitherto they had had no concern[1]. Their time being no longer free for the service of their dioceses, some new arrangement became necessary in the ecclesiastical system, in order to supply the consequent deficiency in pastoral superintendence. Lanfranc was the first to divide his diocese into Archdeaconries and Deaneries, and was followed by Thomas of York and Remigius of Lincoln, the latter of whom created in his own as many as seven fixed Archdeaconries[1]. The like improvement followed in other dioceses, in consequence of the decree of a council held at Winchester. Even these means were not sufficient to relieve the Bishops, especially since, holding baronies under the feudal tenure, they were often called upon for personal service as vassals of the Crown. This led to the introduction of Vicarii or Coadjutors, as they still exist in the Roman communion; Bishops, that is, who, without having local position in the dioceses, were substitutes for the Bishops in posses-

[1] Vide Inett, vol. ii. pp. 63—65.

sion, and relieved them of those duties for which secular engagements or other reasons incapacitated them. These too are called Suffragans, though in no sense Chorepiscopi. Sometimes they were agents of more than one Diocesan at once; and they evaded the ecclesiastical irregularity of being bishops at large, *i. e.* without fixed station in the Church, by being made (what is familiarly called) Bishops *in partibus, i. e. in partibus infidelium,* according to a well known arrangement in the Roman Catholic Church, which, making it a rule not to recede from territory which once has been Christian, keeps up the complement of Bishops in those countries which have relapsed into heathenism, and employs them for various purposes in other parts of the Catholic world. Such were the Suffragan Bishops of the middle ages. For instance, we read of one Petrus Corbariensis or Corabiensis (whatever foreign see is thus denoted) in 1332, suffragan or coadjutor of several sees in the province of Canterbury; in 1531, of a Bishop of Sidon, and again of a Bishop of Hippo assisting Cranmer in the administration of his diocese[1].

This system of Coadjutors, though advantageous in itself and of ancient authority, evidently became an abuse, and destroyed the object of its own institution, if ever one man was allowed to serve at once several Churches. Accordingly, at the Reforma-

[1] Collier, Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 531. Vide also Strype's Memorials of Cranmer, i. 9., and Wharton's Observations.

tion, Cranmer (as I have already incidentally noticed) obtained from Henry VIII. the restoration of the primitive system of the Chorepiscopi, under the received name of Suffragans, by an Act of Parliament passed in the twenty-sixth year of his reign, which is still in force; with this only difference between them and their predecessors in early times, (if there really was even this) that, though still district Bishops, they were fixed in *towns*, not in *villages*, as the necessities of the case plainly required. London, Winchester, Bath and Wells, Salisbury, Lincoln, and York, were among the sees thus assisted. "These," [Suffragans] says Burnet, "were believed to be the same with the Chorepiscopi in the primitive Church; which, as they were begun before the first Council of Nice, so they continued in the Western Church till the ninth century, and then a decretal of Damasus being forged that condemned them, they were put down every where by degrees, and now revived in England. The suffragan sees were as follows: Thetford, Ipswich, Colchester, Dover, Guildford, Southampton, Taunton, Shaftesbury, Molton, Marlborough, Bedford, Leicester, Gloucester, Shrewsbury, Bristol, Penrith, Bridgewater, Nottingham, Grantham, Hull, Huntingdon, Cambridge, Pereth [sic], Berwick, St. Germain's, and the Isle of Wight[1];" twenty-six in all, the Diocesan in each

[1] Burnet, Hist. Reform. iii. The Bishop's form of presenting nominees to the King, and his letters of Commission to them, are given in Strype's Cranmer, Appendix, Nos. xxi, xxii. The

case having the power of nominating two persons, out of whom the King chose, the Archbishop consecrating. No temporal provision is made for them by the Act, which instead supposes them to be beneficed, and extends them a license of non-residence, and "for the better maintenance of their dignity," the privilege of holding "two benefices with cure." It would seem also that the revenues of the see were expected to be made in some measure subservient to this purpose; for the Act provides that they shall not "take any profits of the places or sees whereof they shall be named . . . but only such profits . . . as shall be licensed and limited to them," &c. Sometimes, as we learn from the subsequent history, they were preferred to dignities in the chapter attached to the see.

Little is known about the history of this experiment, made under very different *political* circumstances from the present; but it came to an end in the reign of James the First. Dr. Routh enumerates as many as ten who exercised the office in the reigns of Henry, Edward, and Elizabeth[1]. The only plausible objection, to which the institution was exposed, lay in the apprehension that in troubled times they might be made the agents of

Suffragans were not obliged, by the Act of 26 Henry, to take their title from a town in the diocese where they served. In 1537, Bird, Suffragan of Penrith, was located in Llandaff, and Thomas, Suffragan of Shrewsbury, in St. Asaph. Wharton, on Strype, says, this arrangement was afterwards altered.

[1] Reliqu. Sacr. vol. iii. p. 439.

schismatical proceedings against the Church. But it is obvious that oaths might easily be imposed, restraining them, according to the intention of the office, as fully as Archdeacons, from all independent power and jurisdiction in the Church[1]. As easy would it be to preserve so marked a separation between them and the possession of the civil dignities of the see, as would prevent their ever being looked upon as diocesans elect in their respective neighbourhoods. It only remains to add, what I have above had occasion to mention, that Charles the Second, in his Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical affairs, upon his restoration, promised their re-

[1] Burnet, in his life of Bishop Bedell, p. 2, (ed. 1685) thinks it probable that Suffragans were discontinued in consequence of their interfering in some instances with the jurisdiction of the Sees. "He was put in Holy Orders (1590—1600) by the Bishop Suffragan of Colchester. Till I met with this passage, I did not think these Suffragans had been continued so long in England. How they came to be put down, I do not know; it is probable they did ordain all that desired Orders so promiscuously, that the Bishops found it necessary to let them fall. For complaints were made of this Suffragan, upon which he was threatened with the taking his Commission from him; for though they could do nothing but by a delegation from the Bishop, yet the Orders they gave were still valid, even when they transgressed in conferring them, &c." In the Act of 26 Henry VIII., no provision is made for imposing on them oaths of obedience to their respective sees; without which, irregularities of course might be expected. The Non-juring Bishops appointed Suffragans (of Thetford and Ipswich, vid. Kettlewell's Life, p. 134) but only by way of keeping up their Succession without interfering with the diocesans in possession.

establishment, "because the Dioceses, especially some of them, are thought to be of too large extent;" but for some reason or other the intention was not executed.

In thus setting before the reader the past history of Suffragans, and the grounds on which a restoration of the Order seems to be desirable at the present time, I must be considered to have gone almost to the limits of that liberty which is allowable in persons in private station. To notice the particular sees which might be thus strengthened,—or any specific plan by which the additional provision might be made,—in what cases Archdeacons, or Chancellors, should be appointed,—in what cases Canons, or Prebendaries, as exempt from the semi-civil engagements which press upon Archdeacons [1], —whether certain chapter dignities should be annexed to the see providing Suffragans, or immediately to the Suffragans,—requires a practical acquaintance with our ecclesiastical state, and a knowledge of details, which those only possess upon whom the decision depends. However, if, according to the popular rumour, no difficulty is to be found, not only in annexing stalls to town livings, but even in reconstructing dioceses, surely no very delicate process will be involved in such arrangements as would

[1] R. Barnes, Chancellor of York, was in 1566 consecrated Suffragan of Nottingham. R. Rogers, Prebendary of Canterbury, was in 1569 consecrated Suffragan of Dover. Strype's Life of Parker, iii. 15.

be required by the measure here recommended; and under this feeling it was suggested in the opening of these remarks, that the Royal Commission, in contemplating changes in the application of chapter dignities, did itself open a way to the restoration of the Suffragan system [1].

Without interfering, then, with questions of detail, which, unless they involved some objection to the measure itself, lie beyond the province of these remarks, a brief allusion shall be made in conclusion to the serious political reasons, which exist, for benefiting the Church beyond the mere temporary repairs and expedients of the day. I say *political* reasons, for we all know, that, over and above its sacred character, which ever must be paramount in our thoughts, the Church is a special political blessing. It is confessedly a powerful instrument of state, a minister of untold temporal good to our population, and one of the chief bulwarks of the Monarchy. No institution can be imagined so full of benefit to the poorer classes, nor of such prevailing influence on the side of loyalty and civil order. It is a standing army, ensuring the obedience of the people to the Laws by the weapons of persuasion; by services secretly administered to individuals one by one in the most trying seasons of life, when the spirit is most depressed, the heart most open, and gratitude most ready to take root there. And as evident is its *growing* importance

[1] The restoration of Suffragans is recommended in an interesting paper in the British Magazine, for March, just published.

at this era in our history, when Democracy is let loose upon us. Either the Church is to be the providential instrument of re-adjusting society, or none at all is vouchsafed to us. The Church alone is able to do, what it has often done before,—to wrestle with lawless minds, and bring them under. The Church alone can encourage and confirm the better feelings of our peasantry, conciliate the middle classes, and check the rabble of the towns. The only question, debated on all hands, is, *how* it may be best made subservient to these purposes; and here it is that there is a want of large and clear-sighted views in a number of excellent men, sincerely attached both to its interests and to those of the Monarchy.

I would suggest then, that, if the Crown wishes, at this perilous juncture, to strengthen the Church for the Crown's advantage, it must not limit itself to improvements in the mere working of the system; it must relax in some degree those restraints which press upon the constitution of the Church as an Establishment. At present, though more exactly organized than any other branch of our Institutions, possessed of various powers and privileges, and capable in its own nature of the most vigorous and effective action, the Church has virtually little political independence, and is scarcely more than an instrument, nay, in many of its functions, almost a mere department of the Government. That, in spite of this, it really has a will of its own, and exerts an elevated moral influence, no one can doubt; but the

opportunity of its doing so, is owing to the liberality of the State hitherto, which has not kept so firm a hold of it as it might have done. Though exposed, it is not yet subjected to State tyranny; and there would be no reason why it should not continue in its present circumstances, had not grave changes lately taken place in our civil constitution. It is as clear as it is deplorable, that, in consequence of these, the enemies of the Crown may be its professed servants, and use its ecclesiastical influence and patronage against it. Were the Church in the King's own hand, we might rest content; assured that he, for religion sake, to say nothing of inferior motives, would treat his truest and most loyal servant with due honour. But the balance of the constitution having been disturbed, the state of things on one side of the Throne being *new*, and that of the other *old*, the Democracy may any day step between the King and the Church, and turn the influence of the latter against himself. Should indeed so miserable an event take place, and the Crown's high and varied Church patronage come into the hands of a deliberately and systematically irreligious party, it will be for the Church to consider what becomes it upon the emergency, and surely the providence of God will raise up instruments of our deliverance in that day of rebuke, as He has done of old time. This is altogether another matter; but are members of the Church, are friends of the Monarchy, justified in risking a crisis, in which the Church, prevented from her customary loyal

service, will have no duty remaining, but to save herself?

This consideration, if there were no other, would suffice to show, that something more is requisite at this moment than a bare improvement of the working of the Church system. The late *civil* changes involve the necessity of *ecclesiastical;* the more simple, silent, and gradual, the better, still changes such as will secure the foundation as well as the superstructure of the Church, and guarantee her immunity from the attempts of any profligate faction which may force its way into power. The same State interests which, at some former eras of our history, called for her entire subjection, surely now suggest her partial emancipation. There have been times, we know, when the Civil Power, consulting for its own independence, could do nothing else but fetter down the Church. When she was entangled in an alliance with Rome, the instinct of self-preservation dictated those memorable acts, on the part of the State, violent, yet intelligible in their policy, which broke her spirit. Again, when she took part with an unfortunate family, nothing remained to the new Governors of the Nation, but to deprive her Bishops, silence her Convocation, and bestow her emoluments on the partisans of the Revolution. Those distressing times have passed away. We are no longer exposed to the perplexities of a divided allegiance, whether on spiritual or civil grounds. The Episcopal form, ever repressive of democratic tendencies, is at present in

the hands of an emphatically loyal Church.—Loyalty, indeed, has been her badge since King Charles's days; and the constancy with which she formerly clung to his descendants, is at this day an evidence of her prospective fidelity to the present reigning family. Whatever portion of independence were bestowed on her now, would all be exercised one way. Putting duty out of the question, she has ten thousand motives for a jealous maintenance of the prerogatives of the Crown. If then it is the policy of the latter to create for itself friends, especially in the present peculiar circumstances of the succession, let not its counsellors be so insensible to its interests, as to overlook the ready-formed servant and champion which stands beside it; which, restored to a substantive form, would afford it an effective protection, but which, as a mere dependent, will but become a weapon in hostile hands. And, if they see the expedience of cutting her bonds, let them do so while they can.

It should be observed, moreover, that the same act of grace which would secure the Church against the practices of the Democracy, would also give her popular consideration. One chief part of political power confessedly consists in the display of power. The multitude of men have no opinions, and join the side which seems strongest. While the Church acts through indirect and concealed channels, she will have little influence upon public opinion. A score of Anarchists assembled at a tavern will make a greater impression on the social

fabric. On the other hand, in proportion as her moral power is concentrated, and brought out in particular persons or appointments, will it inspire courage into its friends, or gain over those who else would fall away to the other side. If any one says that a modest and retiring influence is the peculiar ornament of the Church, I answer that it is her privilege in peaceful, not her duty in stirring times. Here is one secret of the success of Dissent. Men do not like to attach themselves to an impalpable system, to a quality, rather than embodied form of religion. Such the Established Church ever must be, while possessed of no inherent liberty of action, no judicial or legislative powers, no ample provision of rulers and functionaries,—in a word, till she is seen in some sufficient sense to be *one*.

I am far from imagining that great changes could be made at once, or that the Clergy, long accustomed to their present position, could be persuaded, without reluctance, to undertake their own concerns, or could at once duly fulfil such a task, or that it would be ever advisable to leave them altogether to themselves, or that power should be put into the hands of the Clergy to the exclusion of the Laity. Or, to take particular cases, I could not desire at this moment to see the Convocation possessed of the privilege of free discussion on Church matters; the probability being, that from the long suspension of such liberty, the present exorbitant influence of the presbytery, and other causes too painful to mention, scandalous dissensions, perhaps a schism,

would be the result. Much less would any alteration be endurable, which tended to give to the Laity the election of their Ministers; a measure utterly destructive of the Church, in the present vagueness of the qualification of Church membership. But there are improvements upon our existing condition which might fairly be begun at once; some of which, being mentioned in the King's Speech, afford a pleasing anticipation that Government is not insensible to the considerations here ventured on. Such, for instance, is the intention of strengthening the discipline of the Church in the case of unworthy Ministers; who are at present sheltered, if Incumbents, by the Law's extreme jealousy of the rights of property. Such again will be our riddance of the necessity of marrying Dissenters; and thereby of degrading a high Christian ordinance into a civil ceremony. Such again, to proceed by way of *illustration*, would be protecting the Clergy from all liability of legal annoyance for refusing the Lord's Supper to scandalous persons. Such, moreover, would be the restoration to the Church of some means of expressing an opinion on the theology of the day; which, though a delicate function, is urgently called for, now that the State has seemingly abandoned the office of conducting religious prosecutions, and when individuals are in various ways usurping a power not exercised by the rightful authority. Such, again, would be the repeal of the Statute of Præmunire, which, though plainly

barbarous and obsolete, yet, as far as it is known, degrades the Church in the eyes of the Nation, by seeming to intimidate her in the exercise of her most solemn and acknowledged prerogatives. Lastly, such in its degree, is the measure, which it has been the object of these pages to advocate ; the appointment of Suffragans being a visible display and concentration of ecclesiastical power, and the substitution of the definiteness and persuasiveness of personal agency for the blind movements of a system.

I must not conclude without briefly expressing my earnest hope, that nothing here said may be understood to recommend any perversion of the Church to mere political purposes. Her highest and true office is doubtless far above any secular object; yet He who has " ordained the powers that be," as well as the Church, has also ordained that the Church, when in most honourable place and most healthy action, should be able to minister such momentous service to the Civil Magistrate, as constitutes an immediate recompense of his piety towards her.

APPENDIX.

POPULATION AND BENEFICES OF THE SEPARATE DIOCESES,

(From the Returns of 1831.*)*

	Population.	Benefices.
Chester	1,883,958	616
London	1,722,685	577
York	1,496,538	828
Lichfield	1,045,481	623
Lincoln	899,468	1,273
Exeter	795,416	607
Winchester	729,607	389
Norwich	690,138	1,076
Durham	469,933	175
Canterbury	405,272	343
Bath and Wells	403,795	440
Salisbury	384,683	408
St. David's	358,451	451
Glocester	315,512	283
Worcester	271,687	222
Chichester	254,460	266
Bristol	232,026	255
Hereford	206,327	326
Peterborough	194,339	305
Rochester	191,875	93
St. Asaph	191,156	160
Llandaff	181,244	194
Bangor	163,712	131
Oxford	140,700	208
Carlisle	135,002	128
Ely	133,722	156

COLLEGIATE CHAPTERS.

1. Brecon.....Dean and Prebendaries.
2. St. Katherine's ....Master and Brethren.
3. Manchester.....Warden and Fellows.
4. Ripon.....Dean and Prebendaries.
5. Southwell .....Prebendaries.
6. Westminster .....Dean and Prebendaries.
7. Windsor .....Dean and Canons.
8. Wolverhampton ....Prebendaries.

SEVENTEEN DIOCESES IN BEDE'S TIME. (A.D. 731.)

Kent	1. Canterbury.
	2. Rochester.
East Saxons	3. London.
East Angles	4. Dummock.
	5. Helmer.
West Saxons.....	6. Winchester.
	7. Sherburn.
Mercia	8. Lichfield.
	9. Leicester.
	10. Lindsey.
	11. Worcester.
	12. Hereford.
South Saxon .....13.	Selsey.
Northumberland. ..14.	York.
	15. Lindisfarne.
	16. Hexham.
	17. Whithern.

THE END.

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